

EDITORIAL

Collaborative Approaches to Scholarship in Student Affairs

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JSAA 10(2) is guest-edited by the South African Association of Senior Student Affairs Professionals (SAASSAP) and Matete Madiba led this effort. The collaboration between the South African Association of Senior Student Affairs Professionals and the *Journal of Student Affairs in Africa (JSAA)* has been a longstanding one. Indeed, it was in the wake of the 2011 SAASSAP conference at Stellenbosch University in South Africa that the idea of creating a platform for publishing the conference proceedings of student affairs conferences in Africa was mooted. In the course of 2012 and 2013, *JSAA* was conceptualised by its original editorial team, but particularly Dr Birgit Schreiber, Dr Thierry Luescher and Ms Tonia Overmeyer. It became a reality with the help and leadership of Prof. Teboho Moja.

Many members of the South African student affairs leadership and SAASSAP members have contributed to the journal over the years and have contributed and collaborated to strengthen student affairs scholarship. This second issue of volume 10 of *JSAA* is the first formal collaboration; a guest-edited issue conceived and implemented under the leadership of Dr Matete Madiba, SAASSAP research and development officer and Director: Student Affairs of the University of Pretoria in South Africa and Dr Birgit Schreiber of the *JSAA* Editorial Executive. This is an issue rich with papers reflecting the diversity of voices and issues in student affairs in South, Southern and continental Africa. The issue reflects how we are still grappling with, reflecting on, researching, and writing about the #FeesMustFall student activism of 2015/16, and also continue to

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discuss the impact the 2020/21 COVID-19 pandemic outbreak has had on our practice and theorising of student affairs.

This issue is also a reflection of *JSAA*'s commitment to promoting collaborative research in student affairs. This issue in particular, has a noticeable number of articles that are co-authored and/or based on collaborative research and the resulting co-authorship is becoming, one hopes, the standard. This is a trend that was described already by Hunter and Leahey (2008), who found that collaborations in research were on the increase, and that co-author prestige was higher than that of sole-author, and only male sole-authorship remained, at least at that time, most common. In healthcare research, for example, collaborative interdisciplinary research also enjoys higher publication rates of high quality than single authorship (Bruzzese et al., 2020).

This guest-edited issue is also a great example of collaboration in a further way in that it is made up of two parts: One part are the articles edited by the guest editor, Dr Matete Madiba, and the second part are articles from the open submission pool of manuscripts that were edited by the *JSAA* Editorial Team. The articles that fall into this second category include the following:

In this issue Dick, Malefane and Müller explore the experiences of student peer leaders using arts-based reflections to complement a qualitative methodology. They explore the intersection of multiple roles of students as peer educators, student leaders, activists, and residents in a student community. The study highlights the complexities emerging from navigating these different challenging roles.

Govender, Reddy and Bhagwan explore the impact of COVID-19 on a group of students and discuss the emerging themes, using the online platform Microsoft Teams as research medium – a medium that has become normalised since the advent of COVID-19. The emerging themes include the need for students to understand the transmissions processes of the virus, mental health issues, and financial stresses.

The article by Machaba and Mostert uses statistical research methods with a large sample (N=1,211) to explore first year students' fit with their course of study. The article highlights the importance of course choice for students and the role that high schools and universities can play in preparing students for making meaningful and good-fit choices, given that a change of faculty and course is difficult in the current rigid degree structures at universities in South Africa and other countries in Africa. The article highlights the kinds of changes required at structural degree and programme level at universities to support student success.

Another article exploring the first-year student experience (FYE) during COVID-19 is authored by Bengesai, Paideya, Naidoo and Mkhonza. They conclude that the contact with, and support from the university in the form of the FYE transition programme was experienced as positive by this sample of first year students.

De Klerk discusses notions and constructions of students as contextualized learners and how this understanding changes the nature and focus of academic advising. The author argues for a broader lens and that deeper contextualization of students is required

to include a consideration of the socio-economic challenges and constraints into which many students are embedded.

The next article is co-authored by Matlala, Pila-Nemutandani and Erasmus and they explore the impact of peer pressure on alcohol use in students' lives. Matlala et al. find that many factors, especially the influence of family, play a significant role in mediating the impact of peer pressure.

McConney and Fourie-Malherbe focus on the FYE and the role and impact of peer mentoring. They find that multiple factors in the peer mentors themselves, and in the quality and frequency of the mentoring process, play a significant role in increasing the positive outcomes of a peer mentoring programme.

The final article in the research section of this issue is authored by Ntema who employed data mining to advance a predictive model of students who are at-risk of dropout. He identified that the carry-over of failed courses is a reliable predictor of high risk of de-registration of a student.

We have three book reviews in this issue, and each of them reviews a significant and outstanding book.

Cunningham reviews Torabian's book *Wealth, Values, Culture and Education: Reviving the Essentials for Equality and Sustainability* and highlights the multi-disciplinary lens Dr Juliette Torabain employed to illuminate the intersection of factors that derail and advance access to education.

Dipitso reviews Walker et al.'s book entitled *Low-Income Students, Human Development and Higher Education in South Africa Opportunities, Obstacles and Outcomes* published by African Minds, which provides critical insight into equity and access of low-income students to higher education in South Africa.

Moletsane reviews *#FeesMustFall and its Aftermath: Violence, Wellbeing and the Student Movement in South Africa*, by Luescher, Wilson Fadji, Morwe, et al., published by the HSRC Press. This extended visual essay and its accompanying exhibition of photographs and narratives generated by photovoice has become a topic of discussion on many campuses where the exhibition has been held. It provides the frame for reflection on the well-being impacts of violence in the context of the student movement in South Africa.

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